



European Women Lawyers Association

The Voice of Women Lawyers Across Europe

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PRESS RELEASE

EWLA warns of retrogressive Tendencies in Female Human Rights Protection in Europe after Council of Europe published latest Report

According to the latest Report published on 4th of December 2017 by the Council of Europe's Commissioner for Human Rights, Nils Muižnieks, there is a pressing need to address and abolish continuing gender stereotypes and inequalities that result in an ongoing and even increasing denial of women's "sexual and reproductive rights" in Europe. This denial or restrictions to women's sexual and reproductive rights stem from a lack of comprehensive sexuality education, modern contraception, safe and legal abortion care as well as quality maternal health care.

These findings are alarming.

Having regard to the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and in particular, the respect for human dignity, the principle of equality before the law and the prohibition of any discrimination based on grounds of gender

EWLA

- demands a redirection and reevaluation of national policies within the EU Member States in this respect,
- urges the European Commission, as the Guardian of the Treaties according to Article 17 of the TEU, to assess recent national legislation, policies and practices in EU Member States if they establish retrogressive restrictions on access to contraception and abortion care or if there are trends to roll back protection in the field of women's sexual and reproductive rights.

The President of EWLA, Katharina Miller, emphasises that "the elimination of discrimination in laws, policies and practices has been a general principle of the European Union Gender Equality Law. We have to make sure that non-discrimination on the grounds of sex and gender equality aims to improve the actual position of women and achieve de facto, substantive equality of women and men in all areas and situations".

The European Women Lawyers Association (EWLA) is registered in Belgium as an international non-governmental, non-profit, association (Association Internationale Sans But Lucratif). It is a federation of national women lawyers associations from amongst the European Union countries and those of EFTA countries. Members of EWLA are also individual women lawyers and academics from these countries. EWLA pursues the co-operation of European women lawyers, in order to combine their specific expertise in monitoring law and politics seen from the angle of fundamental rights, and in particular gender equality.

The European Women Lawyers Association (EWLA) is registered in Belgium as an International Non-profit Association (AISBL)

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